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SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EAP, EAP/MTS, EAP/MLS, EAP/RSP, G/TIP
DRL FOR CARLSON, DOL FOR ILAB/FARMER

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PREF](#) [ID](#)

SUBJECT: G/TIP -- URGENT NEED TO REFORM INDONESIAN LABOR
LAWS TO FURTHER PROTECT MIGRANTS

¶1. This is an Action Request -- Please see Para 6.

¶2. SUMMARY: The Indonesian Working Group on Labor Migration (IWGLM) is seeking International Organization for Migration (IOM) assistance in reforming Indonesian Labor Law 34 on the Placement and Protection of Indonesian Overseas Workers. The GOI realizes that it urgently needs to take steps to bolster its protection of migrant labor. The project proposed below provides the USG with a unique opportunity to strengthen the GOI's protection of trafficking victims. Mission urges Washington to signal support of this program to the IOM and we will provide details of the funding request when available. END SUMMARY.

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE

¶3. (U) The GOI is newly focused on the protection of its migrant labor force. (Note: IOM estimates that in 2008 more than 700,000 Indonesian labor migrants left Indonesia to work abroad.) IOM officials told Poloff that the IWGLM is specifically seeking assistance in reforming Indonesian Labor Law number 39 on the placement and protection of Indonesian overseas workers. The Working Group is made up of representatives from eight ministries and meets regularly.

¶4. (U) A recently completed USG project helped spark the Indonesian government's growing interest in protection. This project, an IOM-organized, PRM-funded program on promoting dialogue and information sharing on labor migration between Indonesia and Malaysia, Singapore and the Middle East (Bahrain, and Kuwait), was reportedly an eye-opening experience for the Indonesians that participated. Thanks in part to this forum, the GOI Working Group is energized to take concrete steps to better protect Indonesian workers abroad.

PROTECTION FOR MIGRANT WORKERS INADEQUATE

¶5. (U) During the Working Group's study trips (August 31 - September 4 Singapore and Malaysia; October 3-8 Bahrain and Kuwait) the members saw for themselves the types of abuse Indonesian migrant workers are at times subjected to. For instance, in Bahrain they visited a holding center where they allegedly saw 615 detainees being held in a facility designed to accommodate 100. In Malaysia they met with Indonesian Embassy officials who reportedly complained bitterly about their inability to adequately care for migrant workers because of a severe lack of resources. The Working Group was stunned to learn that, based on IOM's investigation, more than ninety percent of the Indonesian female migrant workers in Bahrain and Kuwait were the victims of illegal labor recruiters.

USG FUNDING URGENTLY NEEDED

6, (U) Action Request: IOM officials are seeking funding for a project to work with the GOI to overhaul labor law 34. They want to take advantage of the momentum and interest generated by the recently concluded project on labor migration. The project will begin as soon as funding is provided and last between nine to twelve months. Needed changes to the current labor law include tougher restrictions on "worker placement institutions" and stiffer penalties for illegal labor brokers. By funding this project, the USG will be directly involved in strengthening the GOI's prevention and protection of trafficking victims. Mission urges Washington to signal support for this program to IOM. We will provide details on the exact funding request when it becomes available.

HUME